1: Gifford OU9 Tonga OU9

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[For information on seating arrangements in the formal kava circles, see Category 576, especially pp. 166-168.]

2: Mariner F-5 (1806-1810) 1818
OU9 Tonga OU9

there were not a considerable vacant space left opposite the priest. In this space, at the bottom of the circle, sits the man who prepares the cava, the root being previously chewed by the cooks, attendants, and others, who sit behind him: behind these again sit the chiefs indiscriminately among the people. The chiefs take this retired and humble station on account of the sacredness of the occasion, conceiving that such modest demeanour must be acceptable to the gods.

As soon as they are all seated, the priest is considered as inspired, the god being supposed to exist within him from that moment. He remains for a considerable time in silence, with his hands clasped before him; his eyes are cast down, and he rests perfectly still. During the time that the victuals are being shared out, and the cava preparing, the matabooles sometimes begin to consult him; sometimes he answers them, at other times not; in either case he remains with his eyes cast down. Frequently he will not utter a word till the repast is finished, and the cava too. When he speaks, he generally begins in a low and very altered tone of voice, which gradually rises to nearly its natural pitch, though sometimes a little above it. All that he says is supposed to be the declaration of the god, and he accordingly speaks in the first

16: Collocott M-5 (no date) 1921 OU9 Tonga OU9

From my conversations with the Tongans I am not quite sure where the votaries and the priests sat during consultation of a god, but think that the people would sit round at a respectable distance on the green sward in front of the temple, and the priests would sit either just within or without the doorway. Descriptions seem to point to some such arrangement as this, and it is rendered almost certain by its thorough agreement with universal custom in the paying of a ceremonial visit to an important chief. It is hardly necessary to add that all references to the gods were couched in the most deferential language, terms being employed which were applied to the Tui Tonga and the Tamaha alone amongst mortals, though used now of the constitutional king. Such words are naturally used to-day of the Deity in Christian worship.

Another common mark of deference in approaching a superior is the wearing of a mat about the waist, girt on with a cinnet-rope belt. This addition to the dress, called a *tavala*, is universally worn at the *fono*, or assemblies where the people are gathered together to hear the will of their chiefs, or of the government, or when approaching a great chief, especially to ask a favour. It is also worn at funerals. Undoubtedly it was worn by the people approaching one of the ancient gods. A mark of still deeper humility is a wreath of the leaves of the *ifi* (*Inocarpus edulis*, Tahitian chestnut) round the neck. This badge of deference was used, for example, by supplicants suing for their lives. To sit with the head bowed, and these leaves round the neck, was the strongest possible expression of humility and entreaty. Whether it were a common adjunct or not of worship I do not know, but it would seem highly probable that it was employed at all events on occasions of great stress. Mariner describes it as being worn on a certain occasion in entering a temple, but in this instance the wearers were pleading for their lives to a great chief.

Naturally the gods varied in power and influence. Some were resorted to by the whole nation; others were the gods of powerful chiefs and their tribes and clans, whilst others enjoyed a more limited prestige, their devotees being the little group of allied households which forms the usual social unit. There was nothing to prevent a man's setting up a tutelary deity of his own if he were so disposed. The number of the gods, moreover, was liable to constant augumentation by the deification of the illustrious or well-beloved dead. A notable instance is Fakailoatonga, a chief related to Finau, of Vavau. In his life-time Fakailoatonga was a famous warrior, and subdued, or at least over-ran, a large part of Tongatabu, "but he was a leper." For long he was ignorant of the nature of his malady, and his friends sedulously refrained from reference to it. But one day a companion told him the ghastly truth, and Fakailoatonga, in his disgust, buried himself alive. After his death he was elevated to the goddage. In the